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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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GREGORY J. ROSINE, DIRECTOR

February 22, 2002

The Honorable Philip E. Hoffman, Chair ,  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Transportation  
Michigan State Senate  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

The Honorable Scott Shackleton, Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Transportation  
Michigan House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Senator Hoffman and Representative Shackleton:

In accordance with Public Act 59 of 2001, Section 704, enclosed is the Michigan Department of Transportation's Detroit-Chicago Corridor High Speed Service Implementation Report.

If you have any questions or comments regarding these reports, feel free to contact me at (517) 373-2114 or Philip Kazmierski, Deputy Director, Bureau of Urban and Public Transportation, at (517) 373-2282.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gregory J. Rosine".

Gregory J. Rosine  
Director

Enclosure

cc: Members of House and Senate  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation  
B. Hayes  
W. Niles  
D. Novak  
P. Kazmierski  
T. Hoeffner  
E. Timpf  
L. Hostetler  
J. Kraus  
C. Thiel, Senate Fiscal Agency  
W. Hamilton, House Fiscal Agency

## **Detroit-Chicago Corridor High Speed Service Implementation**

As Required by Section 704 of PA 59 2001

February 15, 2002

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Department's efforts to implement high speed rail on the Detroit-Chicago corridor (the Corridor). The Department is using an incremental approach to upgrading the infrastructure, track and train control (signals), stations, grade crossings, and equipment to improve quality of service and allow for travel time between Chicago and Detroit and all intermediate communities to be reduced.

The most significant accomplishment to-date occurred on January 2002. **Maximum train speeds were increased on a portion of the Corridor to 90 mph.** This is the first time in twenty years train speeds have been increased above 79 mph in the United States, outside of the Northeast Corridor. On the 45-mile segment of track owned by Amtrak between Niles and Kalamazoo, the maximum train speed was increased from 79 mph to 90 mph.

To accomplish this, the Department has partnered with Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, and GE-Global Transportation Systems (formerly Harmon Industries). Many public and private grade crossings have been eliminated or reconstructed with upgraded warning devices, track has been resurfaced and aligned with additional stone ballast and several crossties have been replaced. These improvements have made the Amtrak owned track between New Buffalo and Kalamazoo one of the finest segments of railroad in North America. A key to our success has been the train control technology. This technology uses Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) to help locate trains and determine speed. Digital radios are used to transmit data along the railroad right-of-way (wayside) and between the trains and wayside. The microprocessors then channel and analyze data. Through partnering, we have developed a high speed positive train control system that fulfills the federal requirements which allow train speeds above 79 mph.

The Department's efforts do not end with this increase in train speed of 90 mph. Our next goal is to have trains operate over this same segment of track at 100 mph and then 110 mph. Beginning on February 12, 2002, Amtrak has been testing trains at a maximum speed of 110 mph. Once the lengthy and rigorous federally mandated testing process has been completed, train speed will be increased. At this early stage of testing, it would be premature to predict when this next speed increase will transpire.

Train stations have been the second area of focus by the Department. Amtrak received the final approval from the city of Niles to move forward with an enhancement project to reconstruct the platforms, renovate the fencing, improve lighting, repave the parking lot and reconstruct the station track.

## **Detroit-Chicago Corridor High Speed Service Implementation**

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Currently, the Department is not moving forward with the construction of the Detroit New Center Intermodal Passenger Facility. Amtrak's mail and express activities in Detroit have caused them to divert two of the six trains from serving Detroit. At this point, the current facility is adequate for four trains. Once Amtrak has sorted out their operations in Detroit, the Department will develop a schedule to build this project.

The city of Dearborn has contracted with JJR/Smith Group for the site selection and preliminary engineering and designs of a new intermodal facility and group entrance to Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. This project is moving slower than expected.

The Department is in the process of hiring a consultant to design a new track connection from the Norfolk Southern's (NS) tracks west of the Battle Creek Intermodal Facility. This connection will allow westbound trains to leave the facility without using Canadian National's (CN) track or eastbound trains to arrive at the station without using CN's tracks. This will reduce travel time and improve train reliability.

Addressing grade crossing safety, the Department is currently working with ten different road authorities on projects to eliminate crossings and improve warning devices.

The Department has been working with Amtrak and the states of Illinois and Wisconsin for the purchase of new trainsets to be used for the Detroit-Milwaukee-St Louis-Chicago services. Amtrak was leading this effort, but it has stalled due to the lack of a federal funding source. The Department is in the process of scheduling meetings with several equipment manufacturers to explore other options.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, the Department continues to work with eight other Midwest states on the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. Also, the Department is working with Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York on a Cleveland Hub study that would connect Detroit-Toledo-Cleveland-Pittsburgh-Buffalo via a rail network.